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Commission on the Status of Women
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Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century": implementation of strategic objectives and action in critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives: enhanced participation of women in development: an enabling environment for achieving gender equality and the advancement of women, taking into account, inter alia, the fields of education, health and work

Statement submitted by International Islamic Committee for Woman and Child, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

* E/CN.6/2006/1.

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Statement

Most UN data and conventions, including the Beijing document, reflect legal and justifiable concern for the status of women worldwide, and attempt to make changes for the better. Thanks to this international concern, the status of women has improved in the areas of illiteracy, political participation, and some health services that are provided to women in many societies. However, we are still far from achieving our goal, as humanity continues to suffer from many problems, including the following:

- The suffering of women and children as a result of armed disputes and occupation
- The rise in family deterioration which is demonstrated by increasing divorce rates, and the replacement of marriage by other types of relationships that result in illegitimate and abandoned children who have no one to care for them and thus become delinquent, and in some cases are used in drug trafficking and prostitution
- The exploitation of women's bodies for publicity purposes and in the media
- The deterioration of values and ethics which has led to sexual relations outside of marriage, as well as homosexuality (which in some cases begins during adolescence). These practices result in sexually transmitted diseases such as AIDS, and lead to problems related to teen pregnancy such as dropping out of school and illegal abortions.

As our religion and culture are based on the principles of equality between the sexes, and refusal to accept all forms of injustice regardless of the cause, the Coalition of Islamic Organizations (CIO) believes that it is one of its obligations to support such efforts. More than 1400 years ago, Islam established principles that succeeded in accomplishing the following:

- The establishment of equality between the sexes in general human rights and responsibilities, and affirmation of women's full legal competence and financial independence.
- The belief that education is an obligatory right for women just as it is for men, while emphasizing women's rights to family and social care, her right to participate in all aspects of general life, her right to employment. Islam rejects all forms of injustice between the sexes and does not establish rights on the basis of one's femininity or masculinity, except for those rulings that are based on the differences between men and women with regard to their natural duties.
- Islam emphasizes that each sex has characteristics that set it apart from the other, without implying that one is ultimately superior to the other. It is for this reason that the Qur'an has forbidden the practice of preferring sons to daughters.
- Islam opposes all injustices against women such as female infanticide, which is practiced in some societies by way of prenatal sex selection to abort female fetuses, forced marriages, and depriving women of their inheritance. All forms of aggression against women are unconditionally prohibited.

The CIO believes that the document interpretation and application should comply with the following principles:

- Respect for the religious and cultural variability and the specific identity of every people; for just as problems differ according to cultures and societies, so do their solutions.
- Equality must be based on the principles of justice and fairness, and should not assume identicalness in all aspects.
- Root solutions should be developed to deal with problems comprehensively so as to avoid the causes of problems before they begin. Solutions should not merely address the effects of problems like teenage pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases such as AIDS. Islam solves these problems by emphasizing a "culture of chastity" and prohibiting sexual relationships outside of marriage.
- Men and women should be treated within the frame of their social roles in order to maintain familial and societal interests, and avoid individualistic attitudes.

This statement has been adopted by the following non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council:[1] Africa Muslims Agency, Charitable Society for Social Welfare, Federation of Muslim Women's Associations in Nigeria, Human Appeal International, International Islamic Charitable Organization, International Islamic Federation of Student Organizations, International Islamic Relief Organization, International Muslim's Women's Union, Islamic Relief, Muslim World League, Qatar Charitable Society and Scouts musulmans algériens.

[1] Also endorsed by the following organization: Coalition of Islamic Organizations and Soul.